School for Conflict Analysis & Resolution   **Professor Pamina Firchow**
George Mason University
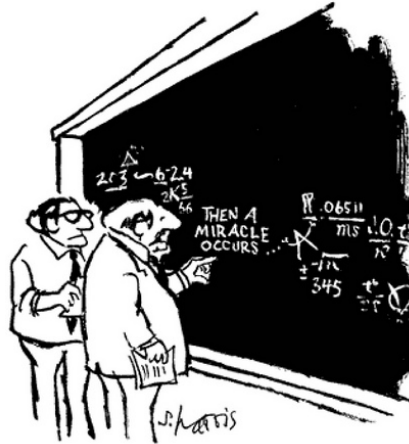
CONF 301
Research & Inquiry in Conflict Resolution

"I think you should be more explicit here in step two."

Office Hours: By appointment	Class Day: Tuesdays
Office Location: 116 Northeast Module II	Class Times: 1:30-4:10pm
Email: pfirchow@gmu.edu	Classroom: Robinson Hall A249

Course Description

Conflict Resolution professionals are frequently asked to conduct analysis on the effectiveness of peacebuilding interventions in the field. In fact, one of the fastest growing sectors in peacebuilding and development is in the 'monitoring and evaluation' field. Just a quick perusal of job sites results in dozens of searches for 'monitoring and evaluation' professionals, yet few graduates of conflict resolution or peace studies programs know exactly what that means. This course provides a foundation, and a beginning, to introduce undergraduates to the world of methods for conducting social analysis of conflict-affected contexts. The goal is to give students the training necessary to create a research project and employ social science methods to carry it out. Students will also gain a cursory understanding of how these methods are operationalized by conflict resolution professionals today.

Therefore, this course examines the kinds of activities, skills, tasks and goals that are needed for sound research in conflict resolution. Throughout the semester, students develop their critical understanding of the research process as they investigate case studies of empirical research that raise central questions about contemporary conflict, conflict resolution and methodology. Students will also develop their own comprehensive research proposal on an individually identified research problem situated within the conflict analysis and resolution literature.

Course Objectives

- Learn how to frame a topic for research and to develop a research proposal
- Survey a wide variety of research methods for collecting or producing data and learn how to use them to address your research problem
- Examine the strengths, limitations and theoretical underpinnings of quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods research
- Provide a basis for more advanced study of research methodology
- To bridge theory & findings with practice (praxis)
- Begin to explore how these methods are used to monitor and evaluate peacebuilding projects by practitioners

Evaluation

Course Requirements

Course requirements include leading class discussions, active class participation and a four-stage Research Proposal process. Each stage of the Research Proposal will be graded separately beginning with the 'Introduction, and Research Question' – Research Proposal 1. Each stage of the proposal builds on the previous paper and includes a revised version of the first paper. Therefore, in Research Proposal 2, you will have revised your first paper and then added a Literature Review section and so on. Your final Research Proposal will be accompanied by a letter responding to comments given by the professor and peer reviewers and why or why not the student decided to integrate these into their final draft. By the end of this class, each of you will have a thoroughly thought out research project proposal that has been revised several times with my help and that of your colleagues through a peer review process. I have designed the work for this class so that you read before class, participate and learn during class, and work on your Research Proposal after class. All the readings listed for a particular week must be completed before coming to class. All assignments are due at midnight on the day they are due (unless otherwise noted in the syllabus).

The class components are worth the following:
1. *Class participation* (15%)
2. *Discussion Facilitation (10%)*
3. *Research Proposal- 1 (5%)*
4. *Research Proposal -2 (20%)*
5. *Research Proposal-3* (25%)
6. *Peer Review of Colleague's Research Proposal* (5%)
7. *Research Proposal Presentation* (10%)
8. *Final Research Proposal (10%)*

Grades and Grading
A Given for work that meets all expectations: shows creative and original thinking, is well organized and clearly written without grammatical and spelling errors, and demonstrates rigorous reading and reflection of assignments.

B Given for work that meets most expectations: good work with a strong argument, sound organization and solid writing.

C Given for work that meets some expectations: the work satisfies the assignment, but offers a more limited analysis and grasp of material explored in the course.

D Given for work that does not meet expectations: inability to engage with concepts and theories discussed in class and in readings, low attendance and/or effort, but reflects a certain degree of participation and effort to learn.

F Given for work that is unacceptable and/or incomplete: no degree of participation and effort to learn material, inability to engage with the concepts and theories learned in class and readings, difficulty writing a comprehensible assignment.

Late Work: Class assignments that are submitted late will be penalized by one point for each day they are late (e.g. B instead of B+). Please email me if you have a documented personal illness or family emergency.

Paper Format: Papers for the course should be typed, double-spaced, have 1" margins, and use a Times New Roman 12-point font. Headers should include only the course number, CONF 301. Papers should have a title, include your name and the professor's name**.** Sources should be cited using a social science academic citation format such as *APA or Chicago* and your final paper must include a bibliography. In text citation should be used instead of footnotes (e.g. Author, Year: page number). Wikipedia is not an appropriate source for academic paper writing. Your papers should cite primarily academic journals, books and reports from reputable international organizations and NGOs, although occasional inclusion of online newspapers is acceptable.

Chicago Style Manual:
http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html
APA Style Manual:
http://www.apastyle.org

Required Course Materials (available at the GMU bookstore or online)

Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber and Patricia Leavy. 2011. The Practice of Qualitative Research - Second Edition. Sage Publications.

Peter Wallensteen. 2011. Peace Research: Theory and Practice (Routledge Studies in Peace and Conflict Resolution): Routledge.

Academic Honesty

All George Mason University students have agreed to abide by the letter and the spirit of the Honor Code. You can find a copy of the Honor Code at academicintegrity.gmu.edu. All violations of the Honor Code will be reported to the Honor Committee for review. With specific regards to plagiarism, three fundamental and rather simple principles to

follow at all times are that: (1) all work submitted be your own; (2) when using the work or ideas of others, including fellow students, give full credit through accurate citations; and (3) if you are uncertain about the ground rules on a particular assignment, ask for clarification. If you have questions about when the contributions of others to your work must be acknowledged and appropriate ways to cite those contributions, please talk with the professor.

S-CAR requires that all written work submitted in partial fulfillment of course or degree requirements must be available in electronic form so that it can be compared with electronic databases, as well as submitted to commercial services to which the School subscribes. Faculty may at any time submit a student's work without prior permission from the student. Individual instructors may require that written work be submitted in electronic as well as printed form. S-CAR's policy on plagiarism is supplementary to the George Mason University Honor Code; it is not intended to replace or substitute for it.

Plagiarism is a serious offense, and all written work for this course should include proper citations in a standard citation format (MLA, APA, etc.). *If you are unsure about how to cite a direct quotation or concept from course or outside readings, then ask for help.* "I wasn't sure how to cite a source, so I left out the reference," is not an acceptable defense for plagiarism. Copies of common style manuals are available at the GMU library reference desk or online at http://library.duke.edu/research/citing/workscited/.

For individual class assignments, you may discuss your ideas with others or ask for feedback; however, you are responsible for making certain that there is no question that the work you hand in is your own. You may not submit papers or presentations from other courses to fulfill assignments for this class. All assignments will be scanned by George Mason's plagiarism detection software.

Classroom Expectations

Additionally, to be courteous to others, including the instructor, you must be on time for class and *turn off all cell phones*. No texting or use of phones during class. Since this is a seminar class and its success ultimately rests with your engaged participation, the use of computers during class is *strongly* discouraged.

Student Resources

English Language Institute

The English Language Institute offers free English language tutoring to non-native English speaking students who are referred by a member of the GMU faculty or staff. For more information, visit http://eli.gmu.edu/, call 703-993-3642 or e-mail malle2@gmu.edu.

The Writing Center

The Writing Center is a free writing resource that offers individual, group, and online tutoring. For general questions and comments, please visit http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/, e-mail wcenter@gmu.edu, or call 703-993-4491.
For further help with writing and formatting, you can use these websites:

Indiana University – http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets.shtml Purdue Online
Writing Lab - http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/557/01/ Oatmeal Guide to
Spelling - http://theoatmeal.com/comics/misspelling

Disability Support Services
Any student with documented learning disabilities or other conditions that may affect
academic performance should: 1) make sure this documentation is on file with the Office
of Disability Support Services (993-2474) to determine the possible accommodations you
might need; and 2) contact her or his instructor to discuss reasonable accommodations.
"George Mason University is committed to providing appropriate services and
accommodations that allow self-identified students and activities at the university as
stated in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with
Disabilities Act of 1990. The staff of the Disability Resource Center Office coordinate
services for students with disabilities, determine reasonable services and accommodations
on the basis of disability, and act as a liaison between students and faculty/ administration
on concerns relating to services and accommodations"
(http://www.gmu.edu/departments/advising/dss.html).

Course Schedule and Assignments
I may supplement these with additional readings throughout the semester

Part 1: Designing Research

Week One, January 20: Introduction to Research & Inquiry
- Kimberly Theidon. 2014. "How was your Trip?" Self-Care for Researchers
  Working and Writing on Violence. Drugs, Security and Democracy Program,
  DSD Working Papers on Research Security: No. 2.

Week Two, January 27: Designing your Research
- The Practice of Qualitative Research, Chapters 1& 2
- Peace Research, Chapter 1
- Chapter 4 (pgs 88-123) in Earl Babbie, The Practice of Social Research

Week Three, February 3: Asking Good Questions
- The Practice of Qualitative Research, Chapter 3
- Peace Research, Chapter 12 & 15
- Chapter 1.2 (pgs 12-28) in Gary King, Robert O. Keohane, Sidney Verba (or
  affectionately referred to by qualitative political scientists as KKV) Designing
  Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research
- Pippa Biddle. The Problem With Little White Girls, Boys and Voluntourism
*Research Proposal 1 Due - Friday, February 5th on Blackboard

Week Four, February 10: The Researcher Identity & Fieldwork Ethics
- The Practice of Qualitative Research, Chapter 4
- Peace Research, Chapter 2
- Rosaldo, Renato. 2003. Grief and a Headhunter's Rage
- IRB human subjects guidelines, the Belmont report
  http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/humansubjects/guidance/belmont.html
- Designing for Results: Integrating Monitoring and Evaluation in Conflict Transformation Programs, Chapter 11
- Milgram, Stanley. 1963 "Behavioral study of obedience" *The Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, Vol. 67, No. 4.
- Watch The Stanford Prison Experiment Documentary
- Christian Davenport, "Researching while black: Why conflict research needs more African Americans (Maybe)

Week Five, February 17: Writing a Literature Review and Bibliography
Mary Oberlies, S-CAR Librarian   ***Please bring laptops to class!***
Gateway Library Instruction Room (Johnson Center, Room 228)
- Please complete this survey ***before*** class: http://bit.ly/1vFfAwX
- Annotated Bibliography assignment due to Mary Oberlies on February 23rd

Week Six, February 24: Writing a Research Proposal
- The Practice of Qualitative Research, Chapter 13
- "Structuring Your Papers (Caltech Rules)",
- "On the Art of Writing Proposals: Some Candid Suggestions for Applicants to Social Science Research Council Competitions"
  *Research Proposal 2 Due – Friday, February 27th on Blackboard

Part 2: Conducting Research

Week Seven, March 3: Quantitative Methods
- Peace Research, Chapter 3, 8 & 9
- 'The Statistics of Deadly Quarrels and the Measurement of Peace (Chapter 3)' in Ramsbotham, Woodhouse & Miall. 2011. <u>Contemporary Conflict Resolution</u>. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Chapter 2 in Human Security Report Project. 2009/10. "The Causes of Peace and the Shrinking Costs of War." New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press and Simon Fraser University, Human Security Report Project

Spring Break March 9-16

Week Eight, March 17: Qualitative Methods
- The Practice of Qualitative Research, Chapter 5 & 9
- Viewing of Louis Theroux's 'Ultra Zionists'
- Hinton, "Why did you kill?"

- Catia Confortini. 2006. Galtung, Violence, and Gender: The Case for a Peace Studies/Feminism Alliance. *Peace & Change*

Week Nine, March 24: Qualitative Methods Presentations
- Prepare group presentations

Week Ten, March 31: Qualitative Methods & Mixed Methods
- The Practice of Qualitative Research, Chapter 11 & 12
- Peace Research, Chapter 10
- Designing for Results: Integrating Monitoring and Evaluation in Conflict Transformation Programs, Chapter 12

Research Proposal 3 Due – Friday, April 3rd

Part 3: Practicing Research

Week Eleven, April 7: What is Peer Review? & Research Proposal Presentations
- Linda B. Nilson. Improving Student Peer Feedback. *College Teaching*: Vol. 51, No. 1.

Week Twelve, April 14: Research Proposal Presentations
*Draft of Final Research Proposal Due in class (paper copies!)

Week Thirteen, April 21: Undergraduate Research Conference
1:30 to 4:10pm Johnson Center, George's
*Peer review comments due in class

Week Fourteen, April 28: Operationalizing Research in Conflict Resolution
- The Practice of Qualitative Research, Chapter 14
- Peace Research, Chapter 16
- Chapters 14 and 15 of John Paul Lederach, The Moral Imagination
- Designing for Results: Integrating Monitoring and Evaluation in Conflict Transformation Programs, Chapter 1 & 2
- Oliver Richmond. 2010. Resistance and the post-liberal Peace. *Millennium: Journal of International Studies,* Vol.38 No.3, pp. 665–692

*Final Research Proposal & Response Letter due – Wednesday, May 6th